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REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REGIONAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES: ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 2 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report prepared by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at the conclusion of their eleventh meeting, held at Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 21 to 23 July 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 77 (a), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Martin BELINGA EBOUTOU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex

UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

REPORT OF THE ELEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The eleventh ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held at Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 21 to 23 July 1999.

2. The following States members took part in the meeting: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. The Republic of Angola was unable to attend.

3. The representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also participated in the work of the meeting.

At the opening ceremony, statements were made by Mr. Halidou Ouedraogo, representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Secretary of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for African Economic Recovery and Development, who read out a message from the Secretary-General, and His Excellency Mr. Peter Mafany Musonge, Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Republic of Cameroon.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Interim report of the Bureau

3. Consideration of the report of the high-level subregional seminar on the consideration and implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318)

4. Consideration of the expert report to the eleventh ministerial meeting:

   A. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

B. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

C. Evaluation of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the tenth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee

D. Establishment of an early warning mechanism

E. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

F. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

G. Establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy

H. Establishment of a subregional mechanism for the prevention, containment and settlement of conflicts

5. Collaboration with the Secretariat General of ECCAS

6. Other matters

7. Adoption of the report of the eleventh ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee.

CONDUCT OF WORK

I. INTERIM REPORT OF THE BUREAU

The Committee took note of the interim report by His Excellency Mr. Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon, as Chairman of the Bureau at the ministerial level.

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Bureau to date to discharge the mandates entrusted to it by the tenth ministerial meeting, particularly those concerning the lifting of the embargo against Burundi, the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), the holding of a high-level seminar on the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on conflicts in Africa and the holding of a summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries on the establishment of a mechanism for the prevention, containment and settlement of conflicts and crises.

II. REVIEW OF THE GEOPOLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Angola

The Committee endorsed the position of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted recently at the Algiers Summit and the relevant Security Council resolutions on the situation in Angola. It expressed deep concern at the impasse prevailing in that country and recommended that a subregional summit meeting be convened urgently in order to break the deadlock.

The Committee mandated the Bureau to undertake appropriate initiatives to that end.

Burundi

The Committee welcomed the positive developments in Burundi and, in particular, the consolidation of the agreement on the political platform between the Government and the National Assembly, and encouraged the transition institutions currently in place to continue to take new initiatives to promote genuine national reconciliation.

The Committee also welcomed the suspension of the embargo which had been declared unjustly against Burundi.

The Committee appealed urgently for mediation so that all the parties to the conflict might be invited to and participate in the inter-Burundian talks being held in Arusha.

It called for the rapid declaration of a ceasefire in order to halt the massacres of innocent civilians.

The Committee also appealed urgently to the international community to support the Government's efforts, in particular, by resuming its economic cooperation aimed at alleviating the suffering of the bruised and battered Burundian people.

Cameroon

The Committee welcomed the strengthening of the climate of peace and stability in Cameroon. It welcomed the imminent adoption of a national good governance programme which would create the most favourable conditions for durable peace and sustainable development.

In view of the impact of the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria on peace and security in the subregion, the Committee welcomed the observance by the two countries of the Geneva Conventions, through the exchange of prisoners of war carried out on 24 November 1998 under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Committee, while reiterating its appeal to the international community and friendly countries to assist in maintaining peace between Cameroon and

Nigeria before, during and after the verdict of the International Court of Justice, requested the Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a rapid conclusion of the proceeding currently before it.

The Committee again urged Nigeria to comply strictly with the interim measures of protection laid down by the Court in its ruling of 15 March 1996, and called upon the two parties to refrain from taking any action that could create difficulties for the application of the final judgment of the Court.

The Committee welcomed the high-level contacts held between Cameroon and Nigeria with a view to promoting a climate of peace and harmony in their bilateral relations. It expressed the wish, accordingly, for the international community to contribute to strengthening the climate of confidence created by those contacts and to encourage the two countries to refrain from taking any action that could undermine the integrity of their respective territories.

The Committee expressed concern at the ongoing cross-border phenomenon of roadblocks, the illegal circulation of small-calibre weapons and weapons of war and the increase in organized crime.

Congo

The Committee was informed of the positive developments in the Congo since the bloody events of December 1998.

It noted with satisfaction the restoration of peace, the reintegration into the army of 430 followers of former President Pascal Lissouba, the return of some political exiles to Brazzaville and of populations displaced by the war to their respective districts, the control of the entire national territory by the Government and the forthcoming Panafrican Music Festival, to be held in Brazzaville from 1 to 8 August.

It welcomed the efforts made by the Congolese authorities to restore peace and foster national reconciliation, particularly the clearly expressed willingness of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso to open a dialogue with all sons and daughters of the Congo.

The Committee appealed solemnly to the entire Congolese people to adhere fully to this desire for peace and national harmony by putting an end to the use of violence, thus committing itself firmly to the task of rebuilding the country and relaunching the democratic process.

The Committee reiterated its appeal to the international community to support the Congo in its efforts to rebuild the country.

Gabon

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and political stability in Gabon.

It expressed concern at the grave situation created in Gabon by the massive influx of refugees from warring neighbouring countries and again appealed

urgently to the United Nations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and to the international community to provide assistance to Gabon with a view to meeting the varied needs of the refugees and helping the country to stem the danger posed by the entry of armed refugees into its territory.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and political stability prevailing in Equatorial Guinea following the latest legislative elections held in May 1999, which had brought three political parties into the National Assembly.

The Committee expressed concern, however, at the incursions to which Equatorial Guinea had been subjected as a result of rivalries between foreign powers over the country's natural resources.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee appealed urgently for the rapid conclusion of a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country.

It welcomed the recent signing of the Lusaka accord by the Heads of State and Government of the countries affected by the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and urged the other parties concerned to do likewise. It called upon all parties to respect the terms of the agreement.

It strongly recommended the opening of a national dialogue among all sons of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the convening of a summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries on the issue.

Central African Republic

The Committee welcomed the gradual restoration of peace and security to the Central African Republic following the serious crises generated by the successive rebellions in 1996 and 1997, thanks to the combined efforts of the Central African people, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) and MINURCA.

It took note of the continuing programme to collect weapons circulating in the country carried out with the assistance of MINURCA. It expressed support for the national programme to demobilize and reintegrate soldiers, which is part of the restructuring of the Central African armed forces.

The Committee welcomed the decision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide the Central African Republic with a grant for the purpose of liquidating a portion of the wage, retirement pension and scholarship arrears, which would undoubtedly contribute to pacifying the social climate.

The Committee expressed satisfaction at the steps taken by the Government of the Central African Republic to ensure that the next presidential election

was held in conditions of peace and security. The Committee welcomed the support provided by the international community for the holding of the election.

The Committee expressed concern at the massive influx into the Central African Republic of refugees and combatants fleeing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It appealed to the international community to assist the Central African Republic in coping with the situation, which could jeopardize the as-yet fragile peace in that country.

While welcoming the efforts made by the United Nations to restore durable peace in the Central African Republic, the Committee called for an extension of the current mandate of MINURCA.

The Chairman of the Bureau was mandated to undertake initiatives to that end vis-à-vis the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Rwanda

The Committee welcomed the restoration of peace and the economic recovery in Rwanda, while encouraging the country to persevere in the search for peace and dialogue. It took note of the holding of local elections in that country at the end of 1998 and the decision of the Forum of Parties making up the Government of National Unity to extend the transition period by four years.

It welcomed the improvement of the security situation in Rwanda and the recent signing of the Lusaka accord. It urged all the parties concerned to comply strictly with the terms of that agreement in order to foster the establishment of durable peace and sustainable development in the region.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability that obtained in Sao Tome and Principe and the efforts made by the Government to promote economic recovery thanks to the encouraging prospects that were emerging.

The Committee welcomed with satisfaction the commitment of Sao Tome and Principe to work towards the eradication of the conflicts causing upheaval in the Central African subregion and its determination to express solidarity with countries whose populations had suffered the devastating impact of war.

Chad

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Government of the Republic of Chad in matters of peace and security, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It noted with satisfaction the consolidation of the process of stabilizing the institutions that had emerged from various consultations and the continuation of the policy of dialogue initiated by President Idriss Deby.

Nevertheless, it expressed concern about the continuing cross-border phenomena of the illegal circulation of small-calibre weapons, drug trafficking and roadblocks, as well as the difficulties of reintegrating demobilized soldiers.

III. INTER-STATE COOPERATION IN SECURITY MATTERS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the actions and initiatives taken by the States members within the framework of cooperation in security matters aimed, in particular, at lessening tension and combating insecurity in the border areas, as well as making it possible to have exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the cross-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and owing to the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended greater cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee particularly welcomed in this regard:

- The meetings between the Gabonese and Congolese authorities on the security problems in the south of Gabon, caused by the influx of refugees and the infiltration of armed elements coming from the Congo;

- The cooperation between the security forces of Gabon and Cameroon which had, in particular, led to the recent transfer by the Gabonese authorities of criminals who had committed offences in Cameroon;

- The periodic meetings of joint commissions on the borders between Chad and Cameroon;

- The meetings between the military authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic on the population movements on the borders of the two countries.

The Committee expressed grave concern about the proliferation of small-calibre weapons and weapons of war in the subregion. It welcomed the forthcoming holding in Chad of a subregional conference on this question in preparation for the twelfth ministerial meeting scheduled for October 1999.

The Committee expressed concern about the resurgence of organized crime and insecurity in the countries in the subregion, particularly the development of the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the holding of a high-level meeting on the question at which the establishment of an appropriate legal framework for cooperation in the matter would, in particular, be envisaged.

The Committee also recommended the establishment of an anti-crime fund. The Bureau was mandated to study and propose ways and means of allocating sufficient resources to the fund.

Recalling the importance of the Non-Aggression Pact concluded in 1996 between the countries of Central Africa for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee invited the countries that had signed the Pact to ratify it. It recommended that the Bureau should draw the attention of the countries which had not yet done so to the need to sign and/or ratify the Pact so that it could enter into force before 2000. The Committee also requested the States members to sign the Mutual Assistance Pact before 2000.

Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation in peace and security matters in the subregion, the Committee welcomed the signing at Yaoundé in April 1999, during the meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs, of the agreement on criminal police cooperation. It appealed to the countries which had not yet done so to take all necessary steps to proceed to the rapid signing of this text and guarantee its full effectiveness.

The Committee expressed grave concern about the security problems created in the subregion by the massive influx of refugees and armed elements coming from other countries. It advocated increased bilateral contacts aimed at lessening the tension aroused by this situation. It also requested the Bureau to take the initiatives needed for the holding of a high-level meeting to consider ways and means of solving the resulting problems.

IV. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A. Establishment of an early warning mechanism

The Committee took note of the advancement of the project to establish an early warning mechanism and welcomed the decision of the Gabonese Government to provide premises for the mechanism in Libreville.

The Bureau of the Committee was mandated to contact the United Nations with a view to the holding of a meeting to launch the early warning mechanism to be attended by ECCAS, the host country of the mechanism, the United Nations and OAU.

B. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

The Committee, after taking note of the meeting of the chiefs of the armed forces general staffs and the meeting of military experts of ECCAS member States, held in Gabon from 1 to 3 May 1998 and from 1 to 25 June 1998, respectively, stressed the importance of joint simulation exercises for peacekeeping operations as an effective means of promoting confidence and strengthening comradeship-in-arms and the operational capacities of the armed

forces of the Central African countries in maintaining peace. It therefore reaffirmed its wish to plan and carry out exercises of this type.

The Committee mandated the Bureau to take all appropriate steps to:

- Finalize the documentation for the Biyongho-98 exercise project designed by the military experts of the Committee;

- Obtain from the States members of the Committee a substantial contribution making it possible to hold the exercise during the second half of 2000;

- Expedite the initiatives undertaken vis-à-vis the United Nations, other international organizations and donor countries concerning the request for a logistic and financial contribution for the effective implementation of the project.

C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the developments in the project to establish a subregional parliament in Central Africa, particularly the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the subregion, meeting at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 1999, to set up a network of parliamentarians for that purpose.

The Bureau of the Committee was mandated to convene an urgent meeting of subregional experts and parliamentarians charged with studying the modalities for the implementation of the network and securing the financing necessary for its functioning.

D. Establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy

The Committee welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the Bureau and all of its members vis-à-vis the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) with a view to the establishment of the subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

It expressed appreciation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Mary Robinson, for her efforts to realize the project to establish the centre, and welcomed the forthcoming appointment in Yaoundé, Cameroon, of an official of UNHCHR as regional adviser for the launching of the project.

E. Establishment of a subregional mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the developments in the implementation of the project, particularly:

- The establishment by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the subregion, meeting at Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 25 February 1999, of a Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);

- The decision taken by the Heads of State and Government of Central African countries, meeting at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 24 June 1999, to integrate COPAX into the structures of ECCAS.

The Committee mandated the Bureau to provide assistance to the Secretariat General of ECCAS with a view to expediting the revision of the Treaty establishing the Community, decided on at the Malabo Summit, in order to make it possible for COPAX to be launched rapidly.

V. CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION IN CENTRAL AFRICA OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND THE PROMOTION OF DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The Committee took note of the report and the recommendations of the high-level seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), and congratulated the participants on the relevance and high quality of the results of their work.

The Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to transmit the conclusions of the seminar to the member States, the Secretary General of ECCAS, the Secretary-General of OAU and the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to their implementation.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF ECCAS

Taking into account the decisions adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries at the summit meeting held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Committee requested the Bureau to discharge its various mandates in close collaboration with the Secretariat General of ECCAS.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

The Committee stressed the need to hold at least one meeting of the Bureau before its own meetings.

The Committee urged the member States to pay their contributions regularly to the special fund set up to finance its activities.

Yaoundé, 23 July 1999